

Walking around the world

Innovation and inspiration for
planning practitioners

Rodney Tolley

Director, WALK21 and Honorary Research Fellow,
Staffordshire University

Presentation map

1. Benefits of walking
2. Barriers to walking
3. Winning back space from traffic: best practice
 - Streets
 - Main roads
 - Cities



The benefits of walking

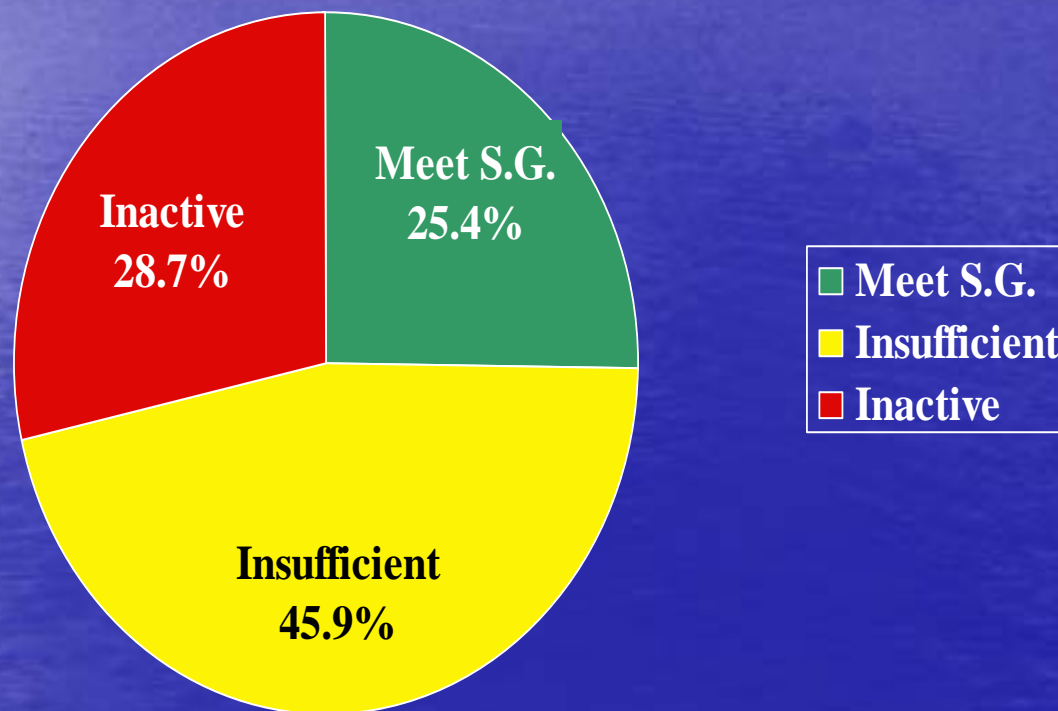
- To the individual

Surgeon General's 1996 Activity Recommendation

- Most or all days of the week
- 30 minutes of moderately vigorous physical activity
- Can be broken up
- Reduced risk for CVD, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, clinical depression, some forms of cancer

U.S. Physical Activity Levels

1998 BRFSS, Centers for Disease Control



Walking and health

“From the health promotion point of view, walking is the most important form of physical activity that should be encouraged to improve public health”

Hillsdon, M and Thorogood, M. *A systematic review of physical activity promotion strategies*, Journal of epidemiology and community health, 1995

“But walking is dangerous.....”

In USA every year:

- 5,000 pedestrian deaths in auto crashes

USA:
400,000
deaths p.a.
due to
sedentary
lifestyles



**An ounce of prevention
is worth a pound of cure**

Making the case for choosing health promotion

Benefits of walking

- To the community

Walking is sustainable transport

- Sustainable transport is...

Transport that meets our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs

- The most sustainable form of transport
 - Uses less space per person
 - Burns no fossil fuels
 - No harmful emissions
 - Modest infrastructure

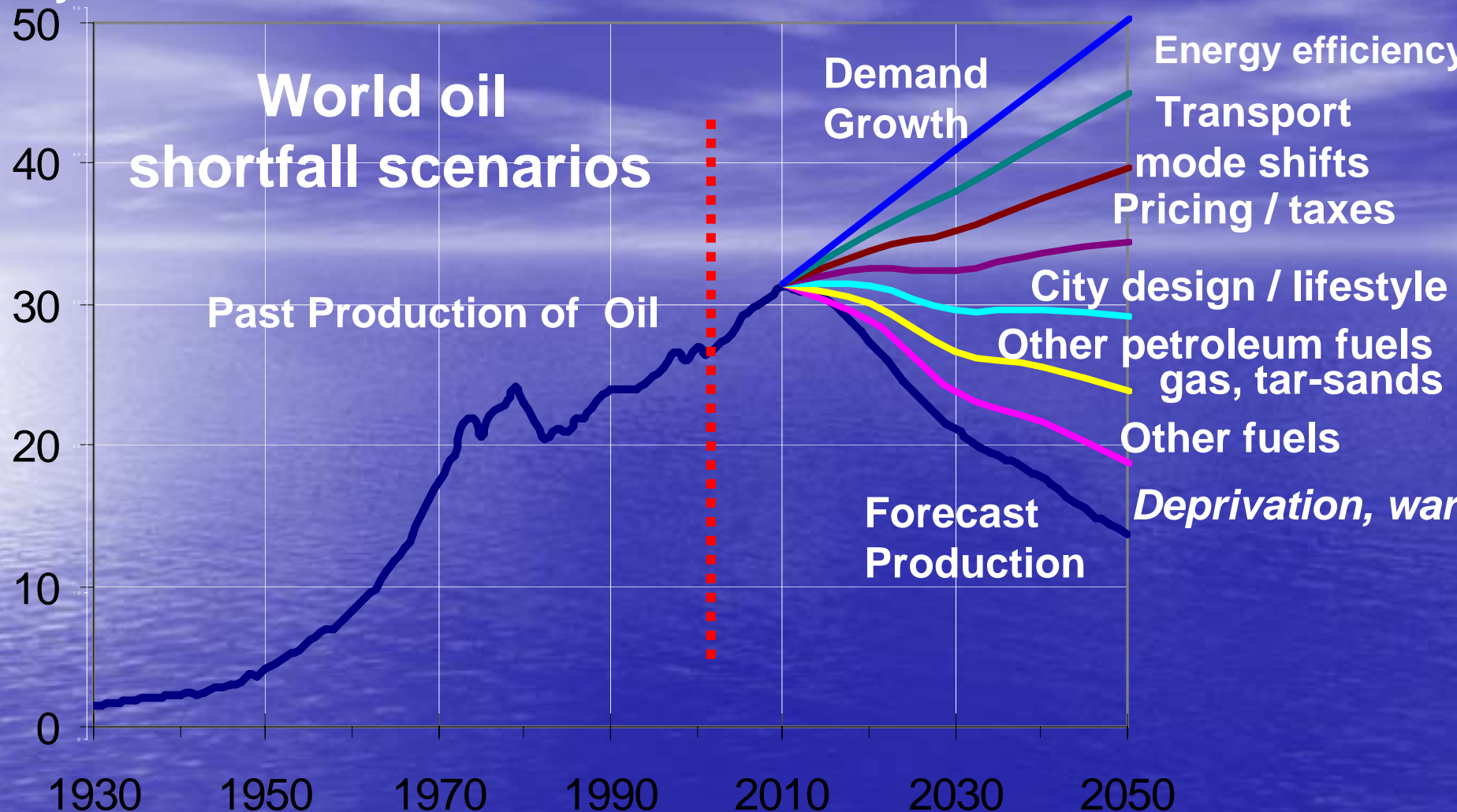
Reducing pollution

- Pollution deaths in the UK are 4-7 times the crash deaths
- Pollution levels highest in cars
- Walking substitutes for cold-start, short car trips which are energy intensive and highly polluting

Global climate change

- Sir Nicholas Stern report 1st November 2006
- Tony Blair:
 - *“The most important report on the future I have ever received”*
 - *“We are heading towards catastrophic tipping points in our climate unless we act”*
- Climate change threatens to cost more than the two World Wars or the Great Depression
- Dramatic changes in our lifestyles required
- Transport as the fastest growing source of emissions

Gb/year



Urgent preparation and adjustment are vital
Noah built his ark before it started raining

Walking is an important freedom for children

Children constrained by parents' fears

- Traffic and stranger danger

Consequences

- Children's health
- Loss of independence
- More parental time chauffeuring

Walking as the 'glue' that binds the transport system together

Direct link between bus patronage and quality of pedestrian access to the bus stops

(2005, London Transport)

Walking creates vibrant streets which are socially safe

- A critical mass creates 'eyes on the street'
- Higher health care cost if elderly home-bound
- Cost of assaults and the associated policing costs
- Loss of community, of social capital

Safety from crashes

Safety in numbers

- Myth that more walking and cycling will lead to higher rates of fatalities and injuries

As walking/cycling increase:

- traffic arrangements are made to accommodate them
- car drivers adapt behaviour

Countries with HIGHER levels of walking/cycling have LOWER rates of injuries and fatalities

Safety and Numbers



Sources: US DOT, Transport 2000 (UK), Central Statistics Bureau, The Netherlands, 1995

Walking promotes social inclusion and community life

- Walking available to nearly everybody, regardless of age, gender, education or income
- Sidewalks foster civic, social, commercial and political life
- Cities are places for meeting, trading, innovation and creativity
- *"As a risk factor for death, social isolation is as big as smoking"* (Robert Putnam)

Walking is a pre-condition for an economically healthy city

- Cities where creative people want to live
- The knowledge economy demands face-to-face meeting

Walking is a pre-condition for an economically healthy city

A good walking environment is a good economic environment

The slower we travel, the more we spend

If walking is so beneficial, we must have made it easy...mustn't we?

- The world's best selling planning (mythical) manual:

"Designing cities as if people don't matter"

Chapters

1. Don't talk to anyone else!
2. Don't collect any data!
3. Transport = cars!
4. Take no risks!

Conclusion? Walking as the invisible mode

Chapter 1: Don't talk to anyone else!

Can any of these policies be delivered without high quality walking conditions?

City Health Plans

Tourism Development Strategies

Town Centre Management

Public Spaces

Neighbourhood Revitalisation

Regeneration

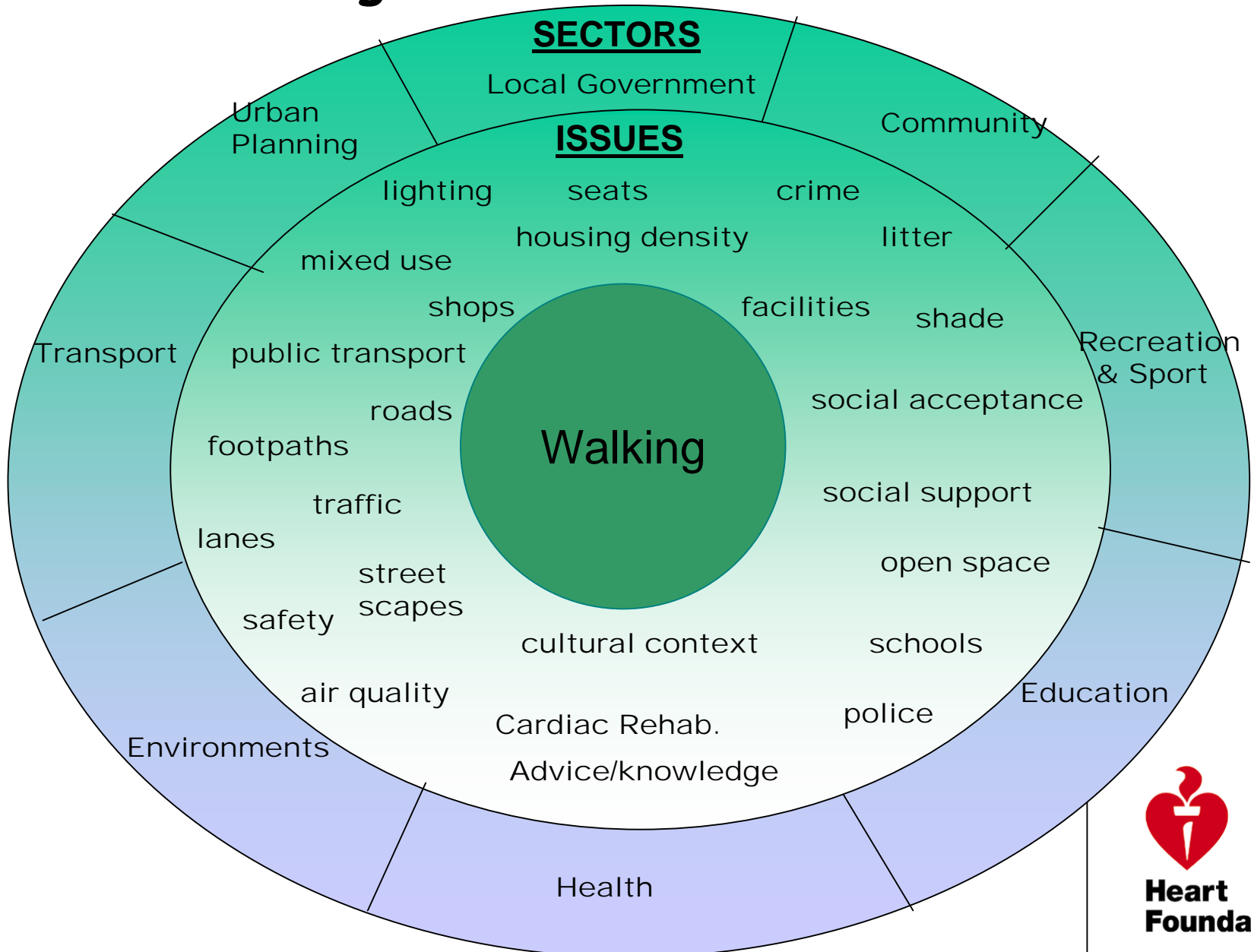
Retail

Crime/Disorder

Air Quality

Public Transport

Walking - Issues and Sectors



Our colleagues in Health tell US...

Research in Perth showed that obesity and overweight were associated with:

- living on a highway;
- living on streets with no footpaths or footpaths on one side only;
- perceiving no paths within walking distance;
- poor access to recreational facilities;
- perceiving no shop within walking distance

So why are we still building
obesogenic environments?



Chapter 2: Don't collect any data!

- Conventional planning view that walking is a minor mode of travel
- But more important than we think:
 - Over 20% of all trips in most countries
 - Vital for - shopping, school
 - children, elderly
 - up to 1 km

Does it matter?

- Shifts resources from walking to roads
- Favours car-orientated land use patterns
- Undervalues pro-walking traffic management, such as traffic calming
- Undervalues pedestrian safety investments

Chapter 3: Transport = cars

Wheels trump feet

No enforcement

Inadequate maintenance

Chapter 4: Take no risks

- Daff and Cramphorn's Survey of Australian engineer's views on pedestrians
 - "They are erratic, unpredictable and stupid"
 - "...behave like cut snakes"
 - "They need to be caged"
 - "Interested in public safety? What we are interested in is not having the Coroner point his finger at us"

Signal design for pedestrians as if they were thinking adults

Malcolm Daff and Bridget Cramphorn, 2006

Conclusion? The invisibility of walking

Governance

- *'Walking is 'hidden' as it is 'so basic to all planning and transport activities, and so undemanding in terms of government finance, that it somehow slips through the net in strategy formulation'* (Metropolitan Transport Research Unit 1996).

Capacity

- Low public capacity to imagine how it could be better
- Little education of professionals on planning for walking

Where are we now?

Where are we going?

- Lack of data and understanding on progress in walking throughout the world
- Kinect Australia/Walk21 2006 snapshot survey of expert opinion

Influences on walking: summary

Strong consensus across the world

We WANT to walk more:

- Personal – better health, more recreation
- Environmental – local issues

We are HELPED to walk more:

- Infrastructural – pedestrianisation
- Regulatory – slowing down cars

But we are SCARED to walk more:

- Social - fear for ourselves and our children (traffic and personal safety)

And we are PREVENTED from walking more:

- Political – pro-car policies

Winning back space from traffic

Why do we need to do it?

- Hupkes' law of constant travel time
 - Three trips a day
 - Constant for hundreds of years
- If we want more walking trips it **MUST** mean less trips by other modes
- The logical corollary: planning for less car traffic
- Cannot deliver more walking without dealing with traffic speed and volume

Winning back space from traffic

How?

- Streets for people
- Busy roads and junctions
 - New life for main roads
 - Naked streets: Netherlands and Switzerland
- Reconquering cities
 - Melbourne

Winning back streets for people

Applying the '5Cs':

- Comfortable
- Convenient
- Convivial
- Conspicuous
- Connected

Adapted from Llewelyn-Davies & the National Retail Planning Forum,
'Going to Town: Improving Town Centre Access', London, 2002

www.nrpf.org

Winning back space from traffic: Major Roads

How?

1. Reducing speeds and traffic danger
2. Widening footpaths, adding cycle lanes
3. Improving public transport to encourage modal switch
4. Greening the street and making it more attractive

Dieting junctions: Hervey Bay, Queensland



Dieting main shopping streets, Rockhampton, Queensland



Hans Monderman's 'naked streets'

The red junction, Oosterwolde, Netherlands

- Until 1998 this was a standard asphalt intersection with lanes, and right-of-way signs
- 4500 vehicles per day
- Formerly 3 serious crashes p.a., now none



Even busier roads: removing traffic lights

- Drachten, Netherlands, 50K population
- 12 of the 15 sets of traffic lights removed so far, rest in 3 years
- Used to be a death every 3 years, now none
- Hans Monderman:
 - *“Taking away traffic lights makes roads safer”*

Not just hardware: use software too

'Soft' transport policy measures

- Workplace and school travel plans;
- Personalised travel planning, travel awareness campaigns, and public transport information and marketing;
- Car clubs and car sharing schemes;
- Teleworking, teleconferencing and home shopping

Forecast benefits in UK:

- A reduction in peak period urban traffic of about 21% (off-peak 13%);
- A nationwide reduction in all traffic of about 11%.

Smarter choices - changing the way we travel

www.dft.gov.uk

Winning back space from traffic: the city level

Gehl and Gemzoe's typology

1. The traditional city

2. The invaded city

3. The abandoned city



4. The re-conquered city

- where public life and walking have been strongly reinforced or re-introduced

Places for People, Melbourne 2004

- 1978 'An empty, useless city centre'
- 1985 City of Melbourne Strategy Plan
- 1994 Jan Gehl 'Places for People' survey
- 2004 Repeat survey



Turning Melbourne into a people-orientated city

- “Of all the things a city can do to improve its environment, Melbourne has done almost everything:
 - More residents and students
 - More people streets, squares, lanes and parks
 - Wider sidewalks
 - Quality materials
 - Active shop frontages
 - Fine furnishings
 - New street trees
 - Public art programs”

Places for People, Melbourne 2004

- For example, in 10 years:
 - 3311% more apartments
 - 71% more space for people
 - 275% more cafes and restaurants
 - 39% more pedestrians, summer weekday
 - 98% more pedestrians, summer evening
- “The results clearly illustrate that places designed to be people-friendly attract people, and public life will follow”
- “The Melbourne Miracle”: Melbourne is now consistently in the top two in the annual World’s Most Liveable City listing

An explosion of interest around the world in walking

The Walk21 Conference Series

- First global conference, *Walk21*, London, February 2000 aimed to:
 - Confirm importance of walking issues
 - Provide an international platform
 - Highlight best practice
 - Identify research, networking and funding opportunities

Walk21 – VIII
Toronto,
Canada,
October, 2007

*“Putting pedestrians
First”*

www.torontowalk21.ca



Key issues and conclusions

- Around the world, there is a stunning renaissance in interest in walking as transport and user of public space
 - Hardware: making places walkable, makes them liveable
 - Software: encourages people to use public space
- Walkability has a positive impact in a range of areas
 - One methodology, multiple outcomes

Thank you!

rodney.tolley@walk21.com

